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Playtime

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Playgrounds
E Playtime 4

A collection of important opinions, kernels of wisdom and foresight, from prominent educators and public-spirited citizens on one of the most vital civic questions of the time.

STATE LIBRARY
OF
MASSACHUSETTS

Photographic reproductions from scenes in playgrounds outfitted by A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc.,
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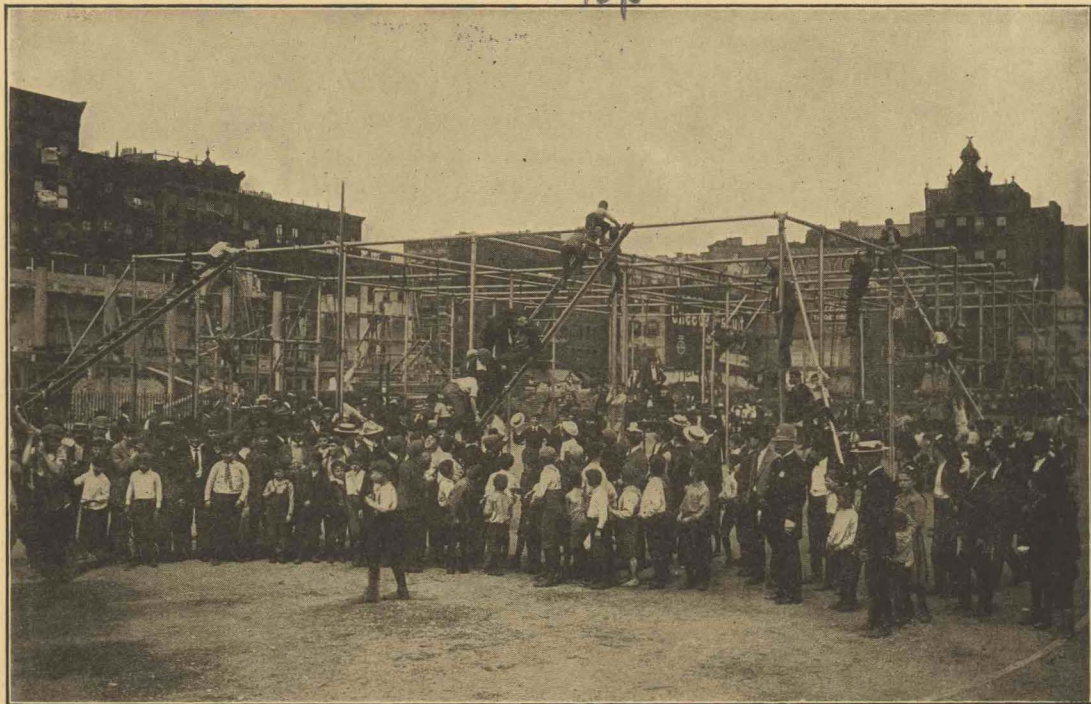
APR 14 1910

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON.

WHAT THE PEOPLE OF MASSACHUSETTS THINK OF
PLAYGROUNDS.

ONE OF the most interesting referendum votes ever presented to the people of Massachusetts was that on Playgrounds, resulting from an enactment of the Legislature of 1908. The act provided that at the next city and town elections all places of 10,000 or more population should vote on the question of providing playgrounds, conveniently located and of suitable size and equipment, for the recreation and physical education of the minors of such city or town; one for the first 20,000 and one for each additional 20,000. . . . Twenty-three cities have voted, and in twenty-two of them the vote has been overwhelmingly favorable. . . . The total vote cast has been 122,896 for, to 25,405 against.

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PLAY counts for morals ; for it is in our play that we choose things according to our character, and by choosing we make our character.

—ELMER ELLSWORTH BROWN

U. S. Commissioner of Education

Happy hearts and happy faces,
Happy play in grassy places ;
That was how in ancient ages
Children grew to kings and sages.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Of all methods of serving those, the conditions of whose lives are narrow and hard, I know of none more important than the creation, in great aggregations of population, of breathing spaces.

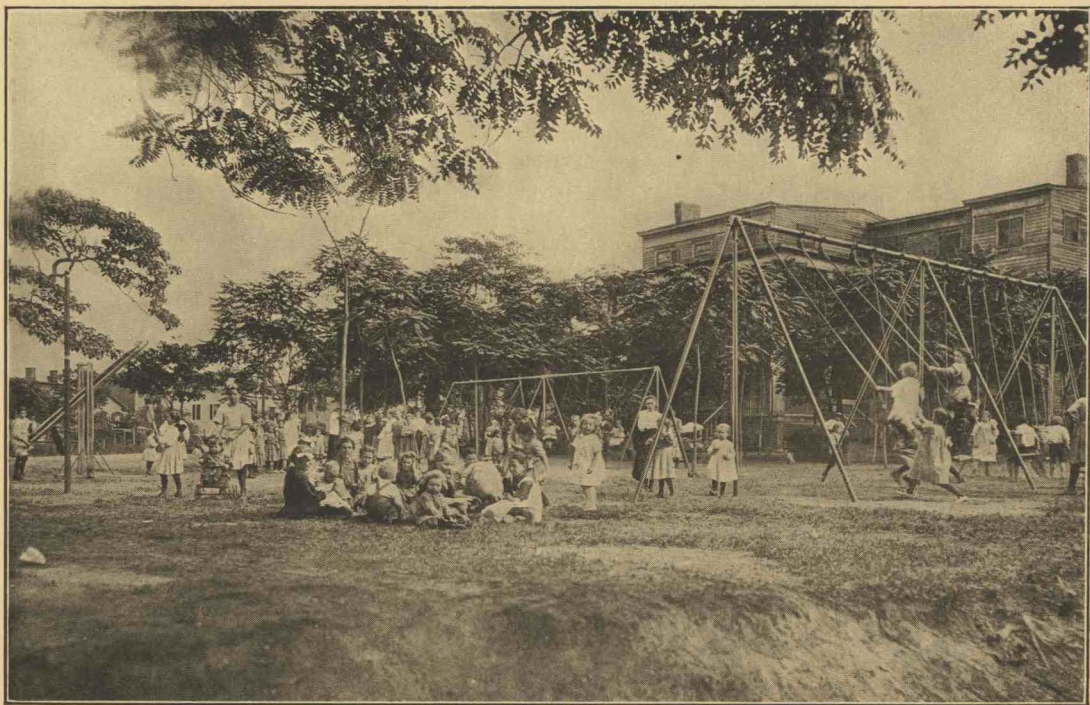
—BISHOP POTTER

He who helps a child helps humanity with a distinctness, with an immediateness which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life can ever give again.

—PHILLIPS BROOKS

The modern city child has lost his most precious birthright—the back yard.

—DR. WOODS HUTCHINSON





HE plays of natural, lively children are the infancy of art. Children live in the world of imagination and feeling. They invest the most insignificant object with any form they please, and see in it whatever they wish to see.

—OEHLENSCHLAEGER

The playground proves to be an economy to the city in that it lessens crime among children.

—JUDGE BENJAMIN LINDSAY

If we attempt to solve the problem of poverty we must provide industrial schools and public playgrounds.

—MISS ELLA J. MASON

Secretary of Child Labor Commission, Auburn, Me.

In these playgrounds and in their work lie the beginning of social redemption of the people in large cities. They furnish the spectacle of a city saving itself; of the people of a great city finding nature and God by finding their neighbors and themselves.

—BERNARD A. ECKHART

Former President West Park Commission, Chicago





HE children begin their education when they begin to play; for play not only affords an outlet for their energy, and so supplies one great means of growth and training, but places them in social relation with their mates and in conscious contact with the world about them. The old games that have been played by generations of children not only precede the training of the school and supplement it, but accomplish some results in the nature of the child which are beyond the reach of the school.

—HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

We apparently think that we can develop the power of self-control without giving people freedom; that we can develop ethical power by merely telling about it, sermonizing about it. We still think that we can cultivate obedience to such an extent that it shall balance over and become self-control; and yet we know that twenty years in prison, where the most perfectly enforced routine of living is secured, does not develop in the individual that high degree of self-control which such perfect obedience would suggest.

—DR. LUTHER HALSEY GULICK





HO is so old that he cannot recall the soft, cool touch of the sand as he patted and smoothed it, the fascinating way in which it slipped through the fingers when poured from one hand into the other, the endless joy of digging into its yellow depths, the facility with which it could be heaped into mountain chains, hollowed into valleys, moulded into forts, and thrown up into breastworks? Who has forgotten the delicate cakes and pies he used to make of sand, or, when it was well smoothed, how he delighted to impress his hand upon the yielding surface, or use it for a drawing board, and sketch figures and letters and pictures upon it?

There is no play material which is at once so responsive, so indestructible, so cheap and so universally enjoyed, and there is nothing which city children, at least, have so little opportunity to use.

—NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

Author of "The Children of the Future"

In addition to receiving the physical benefits that come from wholesome outdoor exercise and the intellectual benefits that come from useful constructive work, the little children on the sand-pile learn fundamental lessons in mutual rights.

—DR. LUTHER HALSEY GULICK



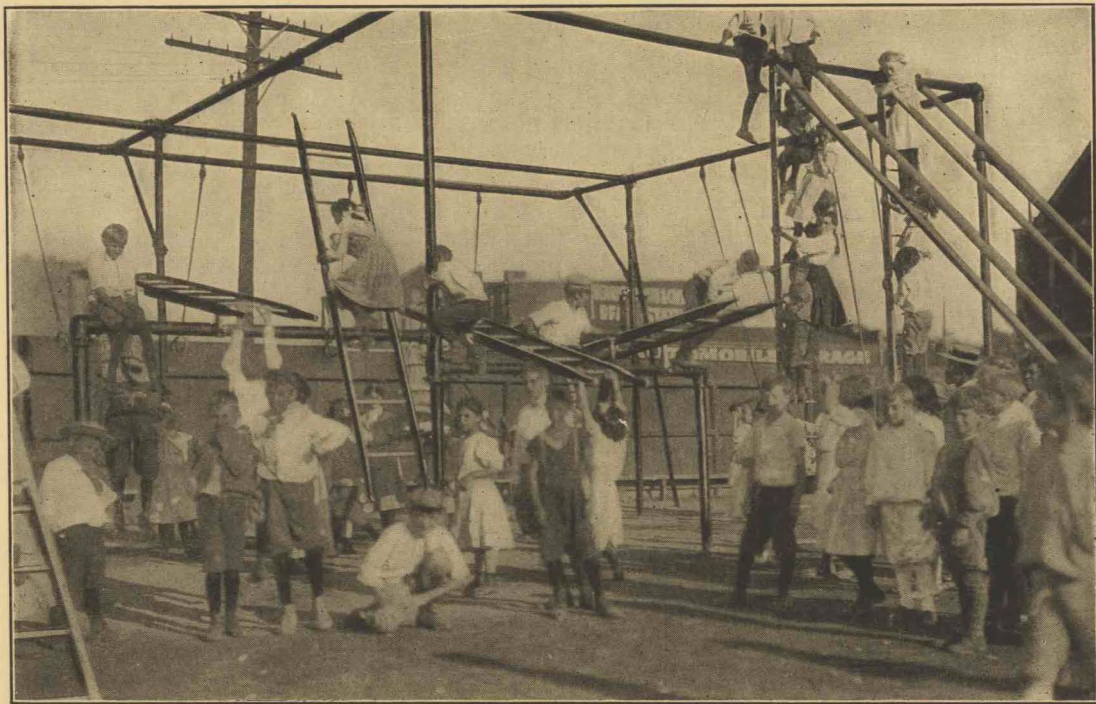


HERE is another point of view which maintains that no matter how great the cost, the value of the boy saved is inestimably beyond it. This point of view is suggested by that Master of practical life Who knew full well the value of money, even the widow's mite. For what shall it profit a city if it gain the whole world and lose the souls of its children? —ALLEN T. BURNS

It is not merely play that our cities and children need. They need the kind of play that makes for wholesome moral and ethical life, the play that makes for those relationships between individuals that will be true to the adult ideals which belong, and should belong, to the community. —DR. LUTHER HALSEY GULICK

I hope that soon all our Public Schools will provide in connection with the school buildings and during school hours the place and time for the recreation as well as the study of the children.
—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

He who helps a boy become a strong and good man makes a contribution of the first class to the welfare of the nation.





HE significant fact is not so much that the South Park Board of Chicago has demonstrated that a system of public recreation can be carried out successfully on a great scale, but that the elements of their system are practicable for town and smaller cities; and that this municipal equipment is less costly than jails, is social insurance in the sense that a fire department is insurance, and as sound sense as good pavements and clean streets.

—"CHARITIES AND THE COMMONS"

The play of children has the mightiest influence on the maintenance or non-maintenance of laws.

—PLATO

The task of education is to assist natural development toward its destined end. As the beginning gives a bias to the whole after development, so the early beginnings of education are of the most importance.

—FROEBEL

Can we hope for normal, healthy, happy children if they are constantly in ugly environment? Are we not reasonably sure that these conditions will almost swamp a well-balanced normal heredity and utterly overthrow and destroy a weak though otherwise good one?

—LUTHER BURBANK





N dealing with the problem of crime in youth, we shall make progress just in proportion as we appreciate the absurdity of limiting our remedies to the court, the jailer and the hangman. Our plea for public playgrounds is a plea for justice to the boy. We are literally crowding him off the earth. We have no right to deny him his heritage, but that is just what we are doing in nearly every large city in this country, and he is hitting back, and hitting hard, when he does not mean to, while we vaguely understand and stupidly punish him for crime. Why shouldn't he rebel? The amazing thing is that he is not worse than he is.

—JUDGE BENJAMIN B. LINDSAY

The child without a playground is father to the man without a job.

—JOSEPH E. LEE

Playing, the child grows character . . . therefore there is nothing in the whole range of schooling that is as educational.

—JACOB RIIS





HE experience of experts in children's courts is favorable to this conclusion: Most of the serious crimes committed by boys and girls can be traced to unfavorable influences, which can be referred to habits of concealment and hypocrisy, formed by boys when trying to play in sections where there are no playgrounds open to them. If this city does not do its full duty by the children it will more than pay for its neglect in the future. Children who are not given a chance to do right have a way of doing wrong. That is the result of the repression of their most useful energies.

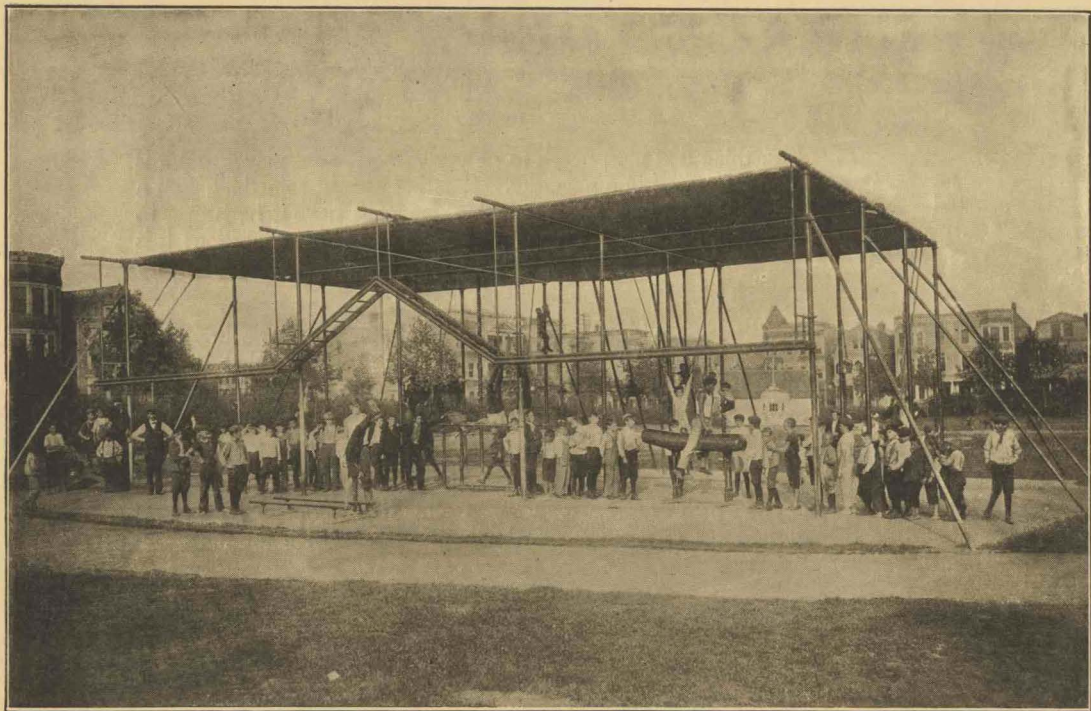
—BROOKLYN (N. Y.) CITIZEN

I regard well-equipped and efficiently supervised playgrounds as one of the most efficient means to save city children from violations of the law, to which they are peculiarly exposed and predisposed by the pressure and complications of modern urban life.

—JUDGE WILLIAM H. DE LACY

All animal life is sensitive to environment, but of all living things the child is the most sensitive. A child absorbs environment. It is the most susceptible thing in the world to influence, and if that force be applied rightly and constantly when the child is in its most receptive condition, the effect will be pronounced, immediate and permanent.

—LUTHER BURBANK





HE thing that most needs to be understood about play is that it is not a luxury, but a necessity. It is not simply something that a child likes to have; it is something he must have if he is ever to grow up. It is more than an essential part of his education; it is an essential part of the law of his growth, of the process by which he becomes a man at all. . . .

The "boy problem," as we call it, is really a grown-up problem. The boy is all right. He breaks our laws, but he does so in obedience to a law that is older than ours, a law that has never failed to get its way or else to impose a penalty—and to collect it. . . .

When "the children were left out in the planning of our cities," when we closed nature's path against the growing child, we made it mathematically certain that he should seek some other path or cease to grow at all. If opportunity for play is denied, and by just so far as it is denied, stunting and perversion are the absolutely inevitable results.

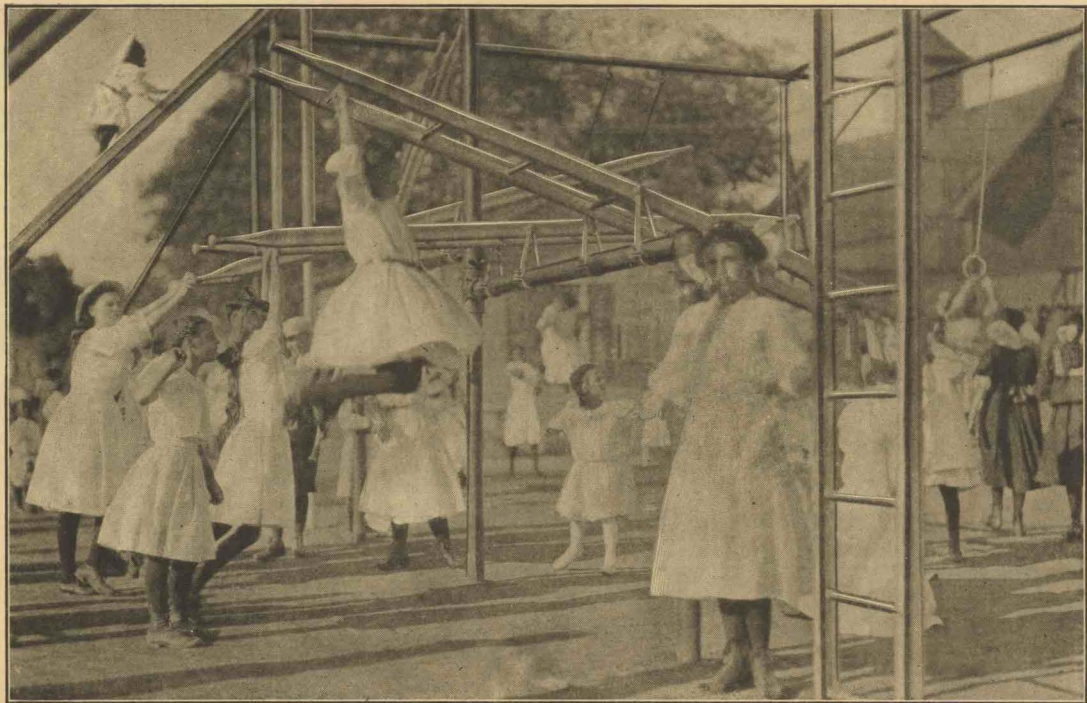
—JOSEPH LEE





IF YOU WISH youth to be moral do not neglect its pleasures, or leave to chance the task of providing them. One can hardly stir without encountering something that resembles unhealthful pleasure. Our children are heirs of a joyless world, and we bequeath them cares, hard questions and complexities. Let us at least make an effort to brighten the morning of their days.

Call them in from the street and unclean amusements by making our playgrounds inviting and attractive. This question of pleasure is capital; staid people generally neglect it as a frivolity, utilitarians as a costly superfluity. It is a sacred flame that must be fed and that throws a splendid radiance over life. He who takes pains to foster it accomplishes a work profitable to humanity, as he who builds bridges, pierces tunnels or cultivates the ground. To give a trifling pleasure, smooth an anxious brow, bring a little light into dark paths, what a truly divine office in the midst of this poor humanity.



A FUNDAMENTAL condition for the permanent development of a free people is that they shall in childhood learn to govern themselves. Self-government is to be learned as an experience rather than taught as a theory. Hence, in a permanent democracy adequate playgrounds for all children are a necessity.

When a municipality makes it illegal to play in the streets it should provide places where play will not only be lawful but encouraged.

—DR. LUTHER HALSEY GULICK

Not skill, nor books, but life itself is the foundation of all education.

—ELBERT HUBBARD

There is no better way to teach a boy to be honorable and straight than to give him an opportunity to play normally with his fellows.

—GOV. CHARLES EVANS HUGHES

The children of the nation are the treasure of the nation. In their small hands lie the England and America of the future. What will they make of these great countries? They will make of them what we, who are now in possession, enable them to make.

—MRS. HUMPHRY WARD



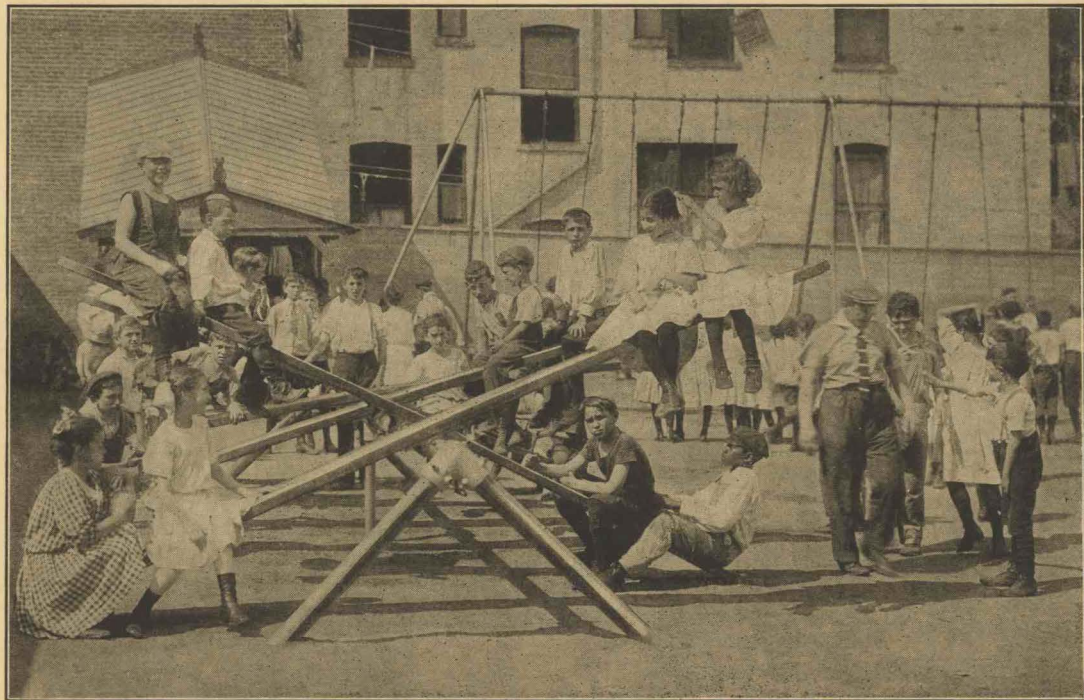
HUMAN NATURE demands play as a necessity. If we thwart this demand we are in danger of rearing criminals instead of good citizens, for the starved natures, balked in their natural desires, will turn to evil if they are not helped to the good.

Money cannot buy good citizens, but a judicious outlay of a comparatively small sum will do more than any other one thing to turn the activities of child-life into the proper and natural channels which lead to good citizenship. . . . It is the very parody upon common sense to appropriate money for playgrounds and refuse it for supervision. That is, indeed, saving at the spigot and wasting at the bunghole.

—JACOB RIIS

Suppose the more fortunate members of the community also were denied the opportunities which they now enjoy for recreation and amusement; suppose, if you will, that laws were passed prohibiting them from running automobiles, from playing golf or tennis, and imagine the effect upon them of the enforcement of such requirements. And yet, for all practical purposes, these are the conditions that exist among the poorer members of the community. They are as virtually denied opportunities of recreation as if they were living under such a statute.

—LAWRENCE VELLER

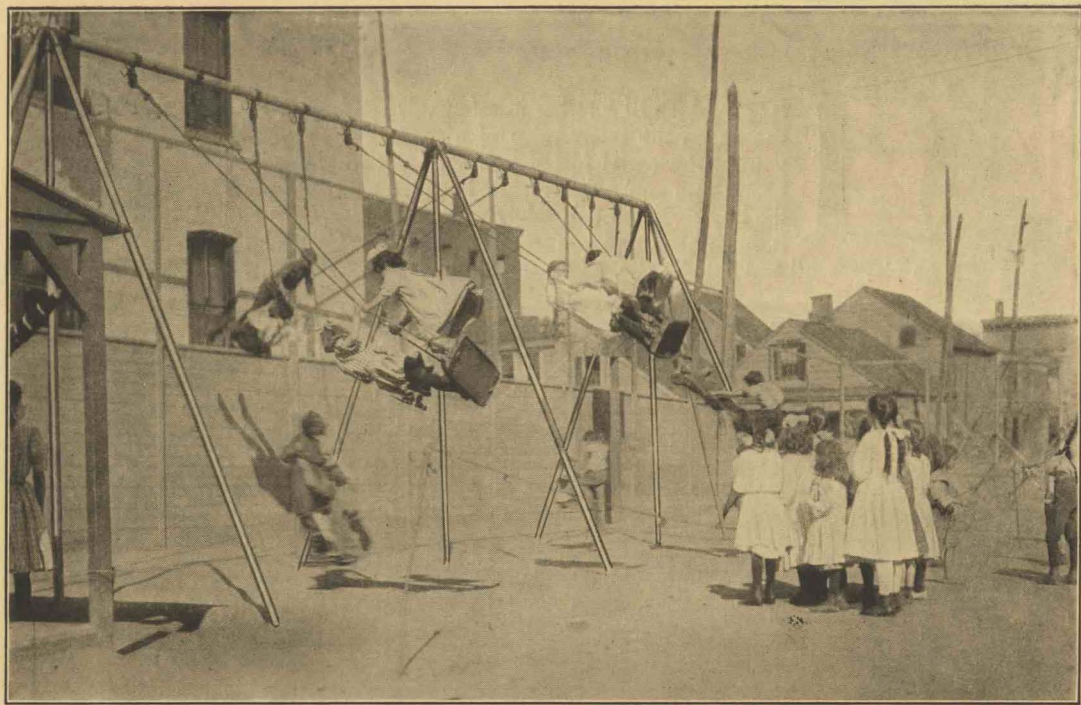


AND surely a real "child garden" should be in the open air! Just to get the problem into debatable form, I would submit a few practical suggestions. First, that every schoolhouse should be provided with a playground, containing at least ten square yards for each pupil. This would make, roughly, for every forty children a city lot (30x120), for 400 children a half block.

For every dollar spent on the building, half a dollar ought to be spent on the playground, and I can hardly conceive of a better investment for the community. Personally, if I had to take my choice for my own child, in one of our large cities, between a school without a playground and a playground without a school, I would choose the playground.

Second, let there be organized, as an auxiliary department of the kindergarden for the younger children, a capacious sand-pit, where they can grub and dig to their hearts' content, a load of "tailings" blocks and short boards of all sizes from a sawmill or carpenter's shop, for building purposes, a few cheap accessories for the Robinson Crusoe and "Indians" play, would suffice. For the larger youngsters, plain, strong swings, bars, rings, trapezes, vaulting horses, seesaws, etc., could be constructed, and, of course, large spaces kept always clear, leveled and free from mud or standing water, for hockey, foot ball, base ball, prisoner's base and all the running games.

—DR. WOODS HUTCHINSON



A STEAM BOILER has its safety valve and a boy has his. You can sit on the safety valve of a steam boiler if you choose, but you are an awful fool if you do. But what else is it we have been doing until quite recently but sitting on the safety valve of the boy? The boy's safety valve is his play. Sit on that, hold it down hard, and you will have trouble. Give him the gutter for a playground and nothing else, and you will have crime as a matter of course.

—JACOB RIIS

Crime in a large city is to the greatest extent merely a question of athletics—of a chance to play.

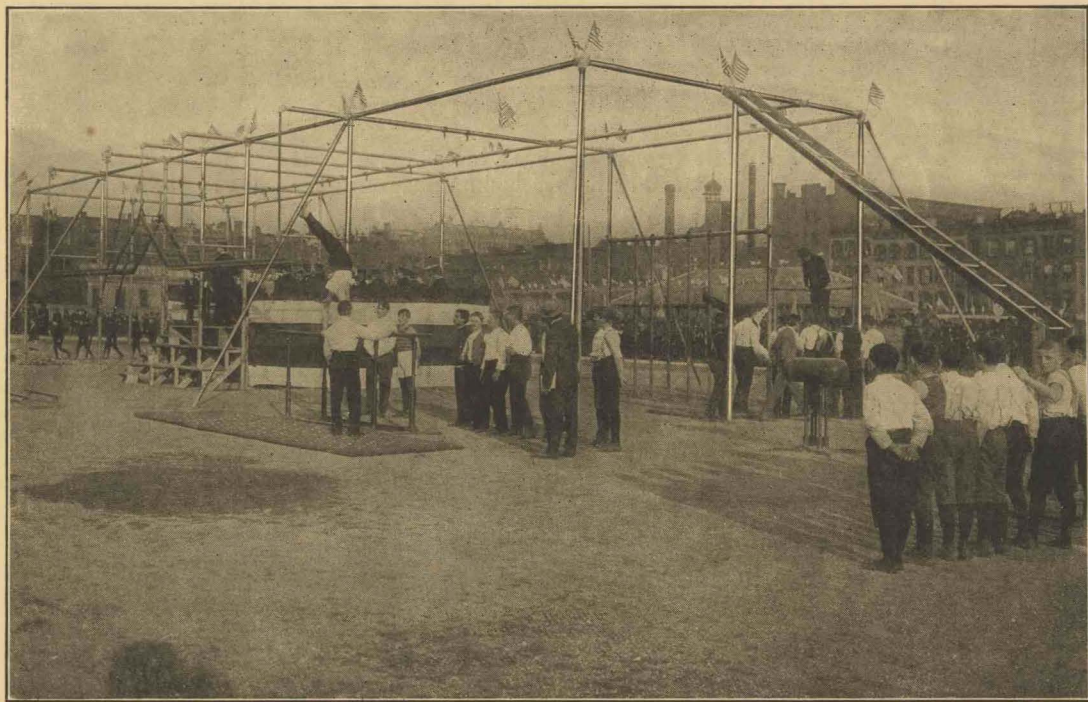
—EARL OF MEATH

To the decree that mankind shall work for its daily bread is added the decree that mankind shall play, for the salvation of both its body and soul—a decree so inwrought in the very constitution of man that there is no greater danger to mankind, especially in its state of childhood, than the prevention or misdirection of play.

—RICHARD WATSON GILDER

There are many causes which are necessary and grimy; causes which are necessary and tiresome; but this surely, this national question of the playtime of our children, is a cause both necessary and delightful.

—MRS. HUMPHRY WARD





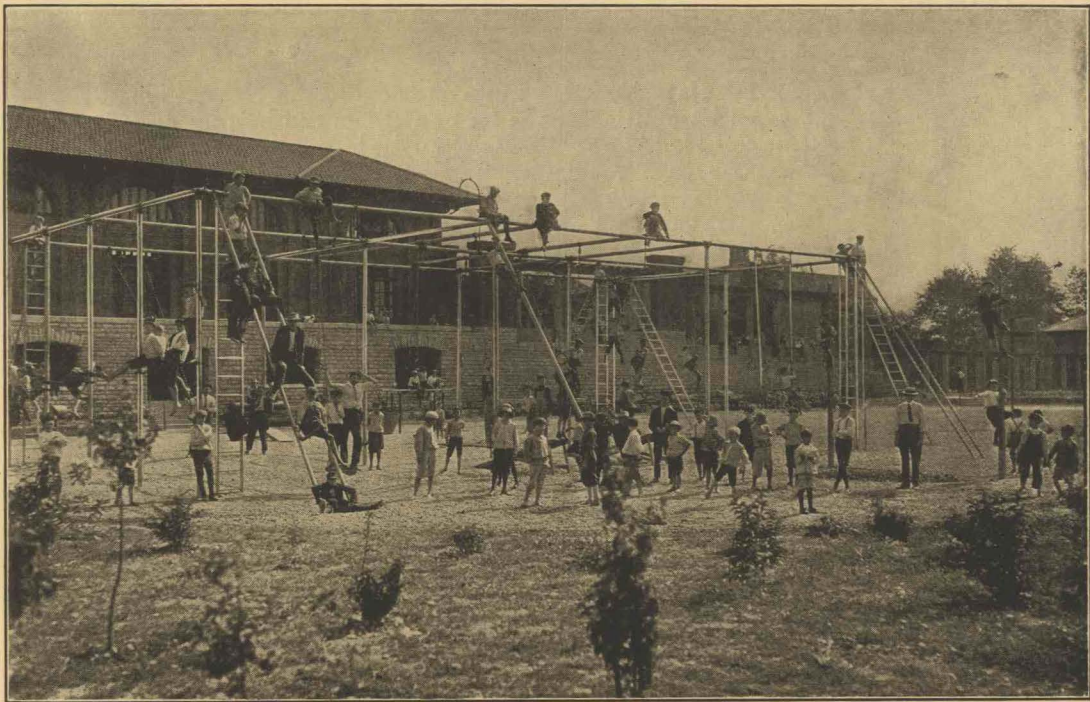
AN plays only where he is a human being in the fullest sense of the word, and he has reached full humanity only when he plays. This proposition will acquire great and deep significance when we shall learn to refer to it to the doubly serious ideas of duty and destiny. It will then sustain the entire superstructure of æsthetic and of the yet more difficult art of life.

—SCHILLER

For children think very much the same thoughts and dream the same dreams as bearded men and marriageable women. Fame and honor, the love of young men and the love of mothers, the business man's pleasure in method—all these and others they anticipate and rehearse in their play hours.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

A city is the more bounden to those among its children whose natural opportunities are the smallest.

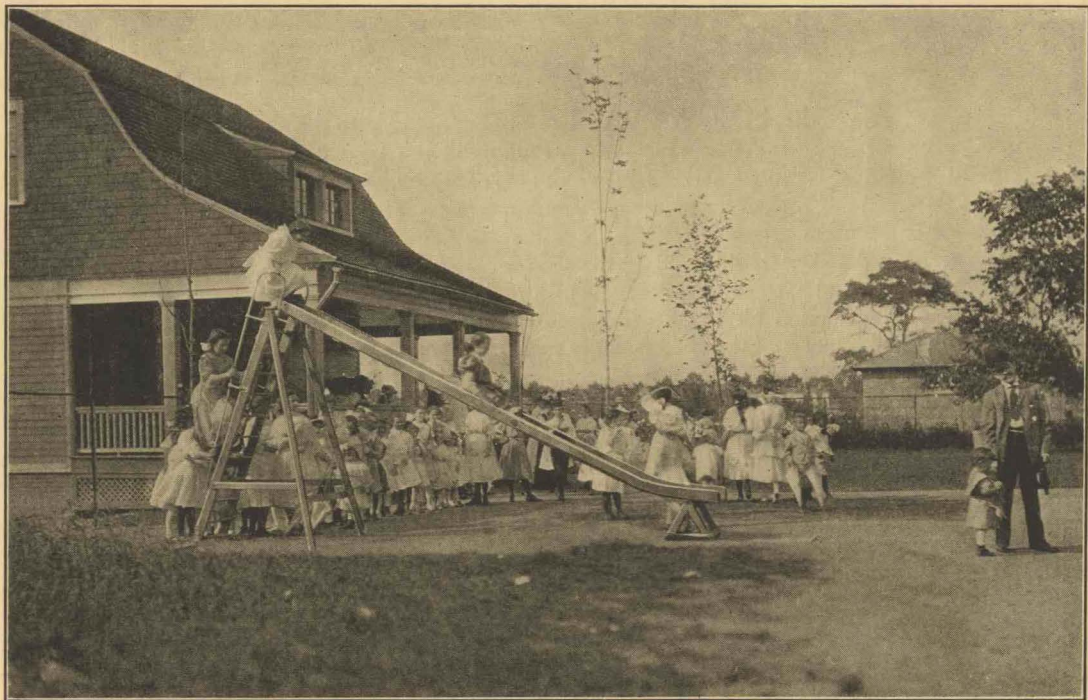


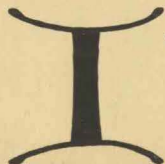


AN living in primitive times was in direct contact with Nature. He raised his own food, made his own clothes and built his own house. He had many chances of varying his occupation throughout the day. All his work was educational. He had the stimulus of seeing a piece of work begun and ended and of enjoying the fruits thereof—all this is in marked contrast with the life of the average factory worker. All those qualities which one admires most in a man are deadened when he is compelled to stand day after day and week after week before a huge machine, of which he becomes but a part.

It is during leisure rather than during work time that character is formed. The basis of character is the will, and at no time does this function of the mind have so free a scope as during recreation. It is then that all restraint is removed and we do as we will. The excellent effect of recreation on character is seen in children at play. Often for the first time they learn the meaning of self-restraint. They learn the significance of co-operation and group action in those games requiring team work. At play the cheat is quickly discovered and punished with ostracism by his fellows. Such object lessons in the fundamentals of morality are invaluable in the normal development of any child. After all, character is acquired from the environment and not from the blood. Amusement is gaining recognition as a force as potent as formal instruction.

—FRANK D. WATSON, in "Charities and the Commons"





IT IS the gravest kind of wrong, not only to the children, but to the whole community, to turn out the boys and girls, especially in congested parts of the city, with no place to play but in the streets.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Because the child is deprived of the proper opportunity to develop his body, we build beautiful palaces for his incarceration during the hours of daylight, so that we may over-develop his brain. If this were not so stupid, it would be criminal. The real business of the child is not to pass examinations, but to grow up.

—DR. WOODS HUTCHINSON

The universal impulse to play is a divinely ordered thing. If God gives the instinct, man ought to provide the playground.

—JOSIAH STRONG

In fact, I think it would be difficult to find any point at which, in our largest cities, a dollar will go further in the making of those things for which the city exists than in the provision and maintenance of playgrounds.

—ELMER E. BROWN

U. S. Commissioner of Education





HE organized games, under the direction of good trainers, develop respect for the rights of others, fairness and self-control; cement the school and homes, and counteract the lawlessness and destructiveness which are the lesson of the vacant lot.

Amusement is stronger than vice, and it alone can stifle the lust for it.

—JANE ADDAMS

Take care of the boys and girls and the welfare of society will be insured.

To learn to play by the "rules of the game"; to be a courteous winner and a good loser, are teachings of the playground. Qualities that are fundamental to good citizenship.

A boy is a man in the cocoon—you don't know what it is going to become. His life is big with possibilities; he may make or unmake kings, change boundary lines between States, write books that will mould characters, or invent machines that will revolutionize the commerce of the world.

—ELBERT HUBBARD

The plays of the age are the heart leaves of the whole future life; for the whole man is visible in them in his finest capacity, in his innermost being.

—FROEBEL



ANY form of education which leaves one less able to meet everyday emergencies and occurrences is unbalanced and vicious, and will lead any people to destruction. . . . Education which makes us lazier and more helpless is of no use.

—LUTHER BURBANK

Be patient with the boys, you are dealing with Soul-stuff—Destiny waits just around the corner.

—ELBERT HUBBARD

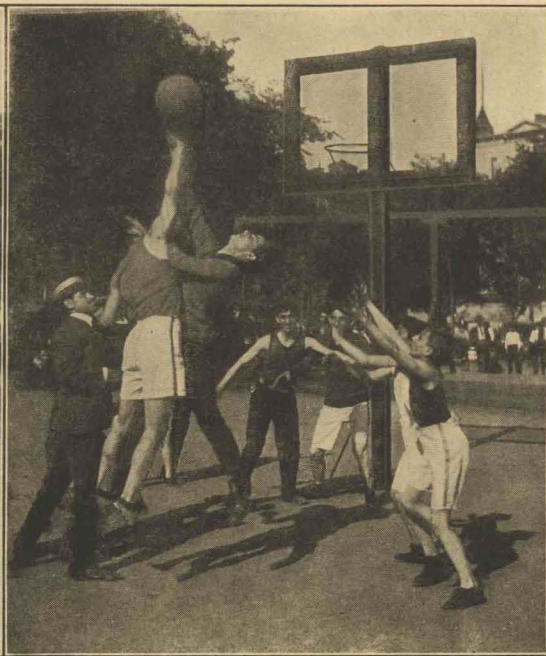
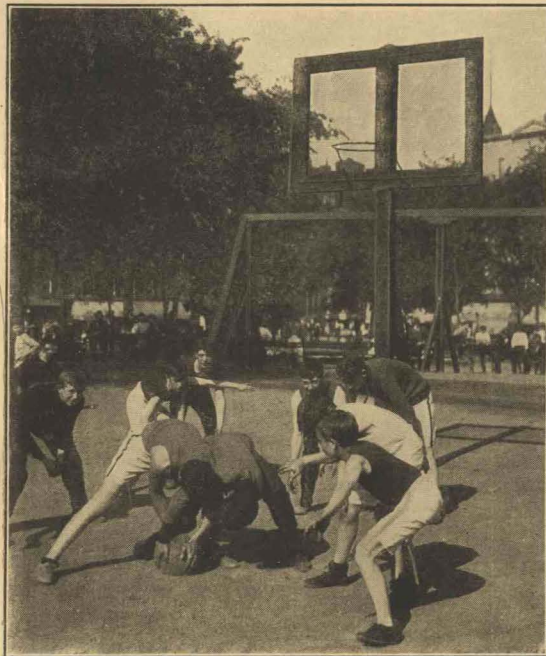
Where is there an acre given to childhood that it may glory in sport and grow into physical and moral manhood? It is for lack of fresh air gardens in our cities for the little ones that we have so many small headstones.

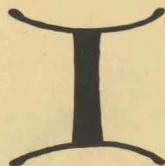
—SAMUEL BROWNE DURYEA

The control in a well-managed playground is largely of the mutual consent kind. It is that control which obtains throughout well-regulated society—the control of public opinion rather than the control of either force or fear.

—DR. LUTHER HALSEY GULICK

A necessary complement to our scheme of public education of to-day is the establishment and proper maintenance of school and park playgrounds.





INSTINCTIVE parental solicitude very rapidly wanes under the hard conditions of existence, and unless this can be fortified by far-reaching and powerful counter-agents, the child will continue to be subordinate to almost any degree. . . . The utility of the playgrounds in their broad relations will stand or fall upon the method of their administration. —DR. HENRY BAIRD FAVILL

In childish play deep meaning lies.

—FROEBEL

Why have playgrounds? Why? Why does a flower need the light? The child needs a playground because his growth is through activity, which his nature has prescribed; and because he will never grow up, or will grow up stunted and perverted if he is denied those opportunities and objects to which his vital instinctive and formative activities relate.

—JOSEPH LEE

Here lies the function of the Playground. It gives the individual the opportunity for mastery of his body under conditions of increasing difficulties in its varied physical activities. It also gives the opportunity for the social experiences of democracy of self and group government. It is the school of physical and social self-discovery and self-direction.

—DR. LUTHER HALSEY GULICK



A LAST WILL

HE WAS stronger and cleverer, no doubt, than other men, and in many broad lines of business he had grown rich, until his wealth exceeded exaggeration. One morning, in his office, he directed a request to his confidential lawyer to come to him in the afternoon. He intended to have his will drawn. A will is a solemn matter, even with men whose life is given up to business, and who are by habit mindful of the future. After giving this direction he took up no other matter, but sat at his desk alone and in silence.

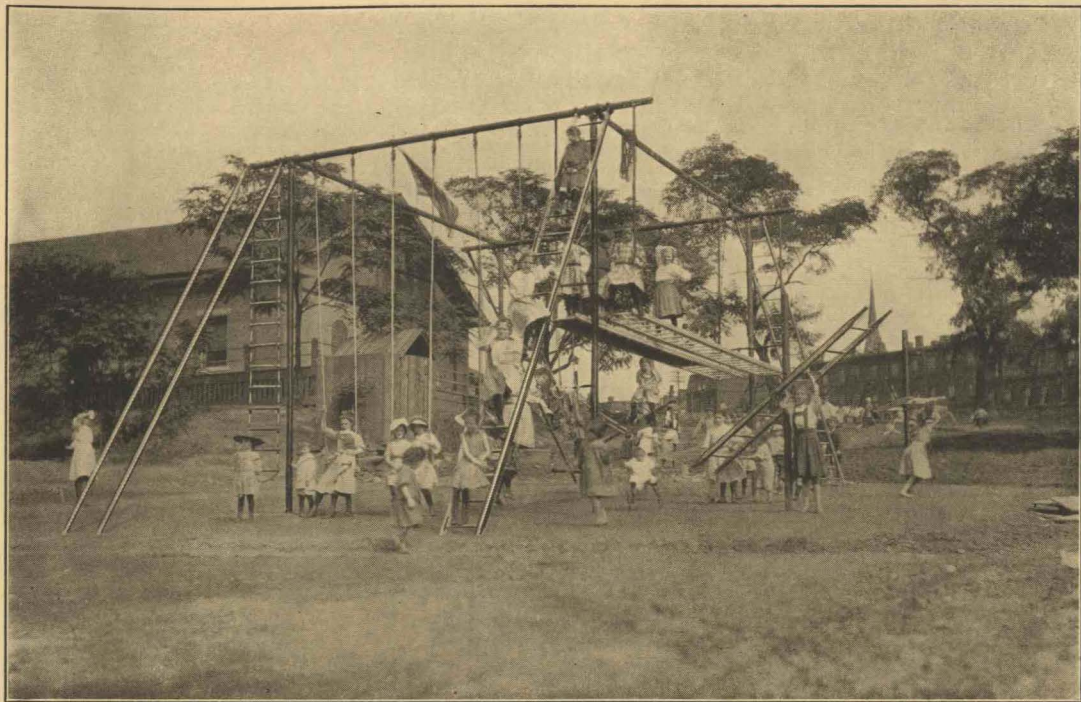
It was a day when summer was first new. The pale leaves upon the trees were starting forth upon the yet unbending branches. The grass in the parks had a freshness in its green like the freshness of the blue in the sky and of the yellow of the sun—a freshness to make one wish that life might renew its youth. The clear breezes from the south wantoned about, and then were still, as if loath to go finally away. Half idly, half thoughtfully, the rich man wrote upon the white paper before him, beginning what he wrote with capital letters such as he had not made since, as a boy at school, he had taken pride in his skill with the pen:

In The Name of God, Amen. I, CHARLES LOUNSBURY, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do now make and publish this, my last will and testament, in order, as justly as I may, to distribute my interests in the world among succeeding men.

And first, that part of my interests, which is known among men and recognized in the sheep-bound volumes of the law as my property, being inconsiderable and of none account, I make no account of in this, my will.

My right to live, it being but a life estate, is not at my disposal, but these things excepted, all else in the world I now proceed to devise and bequeath.

Item: And first, I give to good Fathers and Mothers, but in trust for their children, nevertheless, all good little words of praise and all quaint pet names, and I charge said parents to use them justly, but generously, as the needs of their children shall require.



Item: I leave to children exclusively, but only for the life of their childhood, all, and every, the dandelions of the fields and the daisies thereof, with the right to play among them freely, according to the custom of children, warning them at the same time against the thistles. And I devise to children the yellow shores of creeks and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, with the dragon flies that skim the surface of said waters, and the odors of the willows that dip into said waters, and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees. And I leave to children the long, long days to be merry in, in a thousand ways, and the Night and the Moon, and the train of the Milky Way to wonder at, but subject, nevertheless, to the rights hereinafter given to lovers; and I give to each child the right to choose a star that shall be his, and I direct that the child's father shall tell him the name of it, in order that the child shall always remember the name of that star after he has learned and forgotten astronomy.

Item: I devise to boys, jointly, all the useful idle fields and commons, where ball may be played, and all snow-clad hills where one may coast, and all streams and ponds where one may skate, to have and to hold the same for the period of their boyhood. And all meadows, with the clover blooms and butterflies thereof; and all woods, with their appurtenances of squirrels and whirring birds and echoes and strange noises; and all distant places which may be visited, together with the adventures there found, I do give to said boys to be theirs. And I give to said boys each his own place at the fireside at night, with all pictures that may be seen in the burning wood or coal to enjoy without let or hindrance, and without any incumbrance of cares.

Item: To lovers, I devise their imaginary world, with whatever they may need, as the stars of the sky, the red, red roses by the wall, the snow of the hawthorn, the sweet strains of music, or aught else they may desire to figure to each other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

Item: To young men, jointly, being joined in a brave, mad crowd, I devise and bequeath all boisterous, inspiring sports of rivalry. I give to them the disdain of weakness and undaunted confidence in their own strength. Though they are rude and rough I leave to them alone the power of making lasting friendships, and of possessing companions; and to them exclusively I give all merry songs and brave choruses to sing with smooth voices to troll them forth.



Item: And to those who are no longer children, or youths, or lovers, I leave Memory, and I leave to them the volumes of the poems of Burns and Shakespeare, and of other poets, if there are others, to the end that they may live the old days over again, freely and fully without tithe or diminution; and to those who are no longer children or youths or lovers I leave, too, the knowledge of what a rare, rare world it is.

WILLISTON FISH.

It was in Ohio and near the shore of Lake Erie that Williston Fish, the author of "A Last Will," was born into the vast estate which in this Will he has distributed "as justly as he might" among succeeding men.

There in Ohio and in the Southern part of Michigan (where the creeks, indeed, have yellow shores and golden sands), and at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where young men are "joined in a brave, mad crowd," he became acquainted with his interests in the world. After graduation at West Point, with a standing in the first section in language studies and law and in mathematics as well, he served for a short time in the regular army, continuing his study of law, and continuing, also, his pursuit of the recreation of writing.

He resigned his commission in the army in 1887, and settled in Chicago, where he is now engaged as a lawyer and street railway man.

Mr. Fish wrote "A Last Will" in 1897. It was published in Harper's Weekly in 1898. It has been widely copied by the press, read from pulpits and at banquets of lawyers, reprinted for sale for profit and for charity, and for private circulation.

Unfortunately, the greater number of the many re-publications have been made from badly mutilated text.

We are glad to give "A Last Will" still further publicity by issuing it in the present form, with the true text.



